

WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2022/23 – 2024/25

Institutions are required to submit information under each of the headings below. Please see the guidance notes for help in completing this return.

1.1 Please provide a high-level outline of your institution's Widening Participation policy in Higher Education and how this fits in with the institution's strategic direction.

North West Regional College (NWRC) is the biggest provider of Technical, Vocational Education and Training Provision (TVET) in the North West region with the main campuses located in Derry~Londonderry (Strand Road and Springtown), two campuses at Limavady (Main Street and Greystone) and a campus at Strabane. NWRC operates across two district councils, namely Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) and Causeway Coasts and Glens Council (CCG).



The TVET facilities on our campuses provide aspirational and realistic environments for learning and the college continues to be well placed to take on the challenge of enhancing the skills set of the population of the city and region.

NWRC already operates in a very challenging socio-economic environment due to:

- High deprivation
- High unemployment rates, with systemic long-term unemployment and disengagement from the skills escalator
- Declining population rate of those aged 16+ in the NWRC catchment area impacting on Full Time enrolments
- Higher than average claimant counts
- Skills gaps. In particular, Strabane working age population have very low rates of achievement of qualifications at Level 4 or above
- Further competition from local schools in delivery of 14-19 vocational programmes reducing College recruitment to Entitlement Framework collaborations
- Further competition from local universities adding to the impact of lower population numbers on recruitment to NWRC Higher Education programmes (*CDP, 2020*)

The percentage of working age population in Strabane that achieved NVQ Level 4 and above was 25.1% in 2018 this is almost 10% lower than the Northern Ireland average. The working age economic inactivity rate in the Strabane area is 31.6% and 35.4% in Derry~Londonderry these are both significantly higher than the Northern Ireland average of 27.2% (*NISRA, 2019*).

The impact of COVID 19 has led to an increased number of claimants in DCSDC region – the claimant count was 4.7% in June 2019 and has increased to 7.3% in June 2020 (note the NI average

claimant count in June 2019 was only 2.5%). The claimant count in the CCG region was 2.69% in 2019 (closer to the NI average) and this increased to 5.6% in June 2020 (*Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2020*). If the city and region within which the College is located is to prosper then we need to continue in our dual mandate of helping to develop a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy and supporting social inclusion. We also need to continue to provide a balanced curriculum and an economic support service across the urban and rural districts that we serve. It is important that we assist all sectors to adjust to the impact of COVID 19 during this recovery phase by helping to address the skills needs of the city and region. NWRC continues to play a central role in delivery of Local Government Community Planning. We are active members of Community Planning partnerships in both Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) and in Causeway Coast and Glens (CCG). The North West Regional College remains central to the implementation of a shared plan for promoting better outcomes for everyone and continue to collaborate through these strategic partnerships during this phase of recovery.

NWRC has the highest number of enrolments across the sector of students residing in areas identified in Deprivation Quintiles 1 and 2, with 55% of NWRC 2018/19 enrolments coming from Q1 and Q2 (*Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2021*). The holistic support offered with the collaboration between academic and support teams at the college offers support for students' academic and non-academic needs and by continuing to use a collaborative system, the possibility of academic success that all students strive for including those who are underrepresented in HE can be reached. Student Services and Curriculum teams provide a wraparound positive support intervention service across all campuses aimed at supporting all students who are struggling with their studies to overcome the barriers they face to their education and training. The support team are made up of staff from: Widening access, Safeguarding, Careers, Learning Support, Student Finance, Students Union, and Student Health & Wellbeing. The common purpose is adding value and improving the success and progression for every student.

NWRC is fully committed to improving the access of people from a wide variety of underrepresented backgrounds into Further and Higher Education. Our widening access and participation work aims to equip learners from under-represented backgrounds with the awareness, advice, and opportunities that they need to make informed choices about their future and succeed, and this purpose has not changed in light of Covid-19. We remain as focused as ever on supporting the many people affected by the pandemic, and since it began, the NWRC Student Union and well-being teams have continually developed a range of exciting and engaging activities including but not limited to virtual coffee mornings & quizzes, outdoor photography competitions for staff and students, care packages for students and community groups and they showed initiative by purchasing face masks to ensure our learners would be safe onsite (*See appendix 1*). The NWRCSU and wellbeing teams amalgamated and moved an essentially face-to-face service to a completely virtual service practically overnight which has been invaluable during uncertain times. The college also introduced new measures to support students during and in the aftermath of the pandemic such as becoming the first ever Further and Higher College to adopt Elemental's Digital Social Prescribing Platform, which will enhance student wellbeing, build resilience, and promote new ways of working using social prescribing. This partnership marks an important development in the college's commitment to our student wellbeing programme. When COVID-19 began and we were all sent home, we quickly moved all our content online to Student Portals to allow us to still provide information to students, but in addition to this academic teams rose to the challenge and swiftly moved from physical to virtual teaching and to ensure no student was at a disadvantage we purchased and provided 259 laptops worth £77,700 to help students access remote education during coronavirus (*See appendix 2*). We also issued 500 SIM cards with free data to students on free school meals or who were in receipt of the Hardship fund.

We are fully aware that it is crucial that innovative ways of continuing to support learners from widening access backgrounds are found as it is those learners particularly who stand to lose out from the disruption caused by Covid-19. We as a college look forward to continuing to support students from underrepresented backgrounds in navigating the new normal and are fully committed to adapting a hybrid approach to widening access and participation.

1.2 What is your view of the success record of your institution in relation to recruitment, retention, and progression for Widening Participation students?

Higher education at NWRC has faced many recruitment challenges over the past three years. The 2018-19 MaSN of 710 was not achieved with only 80% of this target being achieved (568 gross enrolments). As a result of this the DfE reduced the college MaSN to 598 in 2019/20 and again to 541 in 2020/21 (*CDP, 2020*).

Curriculum review and refresh occurs at the college which aims to provide high quality, economically relevant focused provision that promotes social inclusion, higher education in further education, data management, technologically enhanced learning, and employability, including widening access. The College's Higher Education Strategy has been developed to respond to the local economy and address the high level of deprivation in the area. Informed by this strategy, the curriculum plan considers the needs of local employers and involves them in approval and review. Most recently new HLA proposals have been submitted to DfE for approval, which seeks to strike a balance between the learning that is important nationally and that which is relevant locally.

Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled on Higher Education courses by relative deprivation quintile in NWRC (2015/16 to 2019/20).

Deprivation Quintile	Academic Year				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Quintile 1 Most Deprived	466	487	480	370	349
Quintile 2	325	309	273	264	230
Quintile 3	229	202	210	203	170
Quintile 4	177	208	170	138	131
Quintile 5 Least Deprived	78	67	79	53	42
Total	1,275	1,273	1,212	1,028	922

Performance rates of final year regulated enrolments of Northern Ireland domiciled students by relative deprivation quintile in 2019/20 NWRC.

Deprivation Quintile	Final Year Enrolments	Final Year Completers	Retention Rate	Achievements	Achievement Rate	Success Rate
Quintile 1 Most Deprived	2,786	2,465	88.5%	2,063	83.7%	74.0%
Quintile 2	1,779	1,615	90.8%	1,385	85.8%	77.9%
Quintile 3	1,789	1,682	94.0%	1,506	89.5%	84.2%
Quintile 4	755	696	92.2%	610	87.6%	80.8%
Quintile 5 Least Deprived	203	178	87.7%	142	79.8%	70.0%

- Over the period 2015/16 to 2019/20, NWRC has had the largest net increase in the proportion of regulated enrolments compared to the other colleges from 79.4% to 81.3%
- In 2019/20 over 50% of regulated enrolments at NWRC came from the two most deprived areas (Quintiles 1 and 2)
- When considering HE in FE enrolments from different deprivation quintiles across the six colleges, there was a lot of regional variation in 2019/20. NWRC attracted 38.2% of its HE enrolments from Quintile 1, compared with 4.4% from Quintile 5.
- Between 2015/16 and 2019/20, increases in retention rates occurred NWRC by 2.4%
- In 2019/20 at NWRC the part-time success rate was 78.3% and the full-time success rate was 77.8%
- The highest retention rates in NWRC of 94% related to Quintile 3
- In 2019/20, NWRC highest success rate was Quintile 3 (84.2%)

(Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2021)

Securing Enrolments

Several marketing campaigns occur throughout each academic year with a view to increasing applications. These include Pre and Post results dates; information sessions were available online hosted by curriculum staff from each curriculum area to assist potential applicants with their decisions.

Also, webinars and Q&A sessions were delivered online by the college's Career Academy to assist young people make informed choices and set out the options available to them.

Delivering HMP Magilligan Programmes

Since March 2020, the college has supported student learning through the distribution of materials/workbooks in all subject areas and virtual delivery commenced in six curriculum areas in June 2020. A new programme of virtual learning (10 programmes) has been designed and was introduced on 3 August 2020. There are plans in place to expand this offer and provide increased blended learning. Face to face teaching was re-introduced in six curriculum areas in September 2020 along with virtual delivery. Some of the positive impacts during 2019/20 were:

- All courses delivered were offered to Level 2 with 15% offered at Level 3
- 62% of transferees from HMP Maghaberry that had not previously engaged in education are participating in full award programmes within 30 days of transfer to HMP Magilligan.
- 98% of learners in 2019/20 rated their experience of Learning and Skills as being "positive" or "very positive"
- Learners won an unprecedented number of awards in 2019/20 in national student competitions in Creative Writing; Art and Barbering (Listowel & Koestler).
- NWRC Magilligan delivered the first SkillsBuild competition within a prison setting in October 2019. This competition provided students with an opportunity to showcase the knowledge and skills they had acquired while undertaking accredited programmes with the North-West Regional College. Magilligan worked with colleagues from North West Regional College to successfully deliver learning and skills programmes that are directly linked to job opportunities within our communities, allowing the prisons rehabilitative work to extend beyond the prison walls and support people in their care to reintegrate back into society.

Delivering Community/Outreach Programmes

NWRC will continue to support the most disadvantaged in our communities by ensuring access to learning opportunities that lead to sustainable career pathways. Our Community team are working with our Health and Safety Officer to ensure our staff and students are in a position to adhere to the COVID guidance set out the FE Colleges Framework for the safe resumption of on-site educational provision and related activity at the relevant outreach centres. Some of the positive impacts during 2019/20 were:

- SEN provision, providing an invaluable source of personal, social and education development to participants made up 44% of the community enrolments.
- Accredited courses delivered in the community increased by 2% from 2018/19 to 2019/20
- Community enrolments in the Limavady area increased by 47% from 2018/19 to 2019/20 where new centres were engaged to expand the reach of the provision.
- Retention on accredited programmes in 2019/20 was maintained in 2019/20 at 98.6%
- Achievement and Success rates for 2018/19 were 90.3% and 89% respectively (*CDP, 2020*)

WAP Officer Online Outreach and Digital Engagement

This year, online outreach and digital engagement became the colleges only means of connecting with students, including those from under-represented backgrounds. Using online platforms gives us a greater geographic reach and gives students the flexibility to engage as they have the time. Through online outreach, the Widening Access & Participation Officer was able to engage with WAP groups, offering videos for a school fair to ensure that all their pupils and parents are aware of what options exist for them at NWRC, linking in with youth groups to highlight the college to young participants in their programme so that they possibly might see NWRC as a future aspiration and videos tailored to schools surrounding specific courses available to students. The Widening Access and Participation Officer has worked closely with teams in Student Services this year, including the Student Union and Safeguarding to develop online content for students. With the Safeguarding team we developed posters and content covering subjects such as 'What to Do If You Are Feeling Anxious' and '10 Tips to Help NWRC Students Look After Their Mental Health in Lockdown', and with the Student Union created videos for our student Induction at the college. Since December 2020, the Widening Access & Participation Officer has been using the college's Student Services social media platforms to post regular updates and to increase awareness around Widening Access and Participation areas. From December 2020 to March 2021 the Widening Access posts has reached a substantial number of people via Facebook, including 4005 people reached and 259 online engagements. Using social media, the Widening Access and Participation Officer was also able to offer information on topics such as 'Why Progress to Higher Education' (*See appendix 3*) 'A Students Guide to Learning from

Home' (**See appendix 4**) as well and an introduction and explanation of what widening access and participation is at the college.

The Careers Academy

In addition to weekly careers workshops and guidance on offer, the Careers Academy team delivered 17 additional recruitment campaigns and themes in response throughout the Covid-19 pandemic raising the profile of the college and promoting positive mental health. There was a 6% increase in the number of successful students placed to Higher Education via the UCAS platform, 67% placed in 2019/20 and 73% placed in 2020/21. As a result of the Careers Academy "loveourcollege" campaign, the careers academy team received 55 emails for course advice and guidance. This campaign successfully promotes the successful progression pathways to Higher Education. The Careers Academy Manager hosted a Facebook live Q&A session for Virtual Higher Education Week in 2021, the Facebook live generated engagement of 7500 views and a total reach throughout the week of over 30,700. As a result of progression month 115 Higher Education applications were received, 80 full time and 35 part time, 453 full time Further Education and WBL applications were also received throughout this month. Despite remote learning due to Covid 19, there was an increase of 66 recorded one to one career guidance sessions. There was a reduction in Careers Academy workshops due to Covid 19 restricting the delivery of workshops. The Careers Academy had an objective to deliver 50% of the workshops delivered in 2019/20 (241) throughout the Covid pandemic. The Careers team achieved that and delivered an additional 98 workshops. There was also a 89% success rate of students progressing to nursing or midwifery despite the late notice of the termination of MMIs and introduction of the new interview format. The Careers Academy team adapted the new format within 48hrs of announcement for successful rollout.

Student Services and The Careers Academy have improved the support offered to students to help reduce withdrawals and progress coaches were appointed in 2019 to aid this. The progress coaches successfully referred 64 students to other student services support areas in 2020/21, indicating a positive interdepartmental collaboration with a holistic approach to student centred care. The progress coaches enabled 107 students to remain on course via different support interventions. The NWRC Retention Working Group (set up in 2017/18) also continues to support and monitor student attendance in an effort to identify issues that may affect retention.

1.3 Please outline the Widening Participation aims, objectives and targets for the next 3 years for your institution.

You will need to provide details on key target groups within Access to Success, anticipated expenditure and the measures of success – your response should include a description of your approach to targeting, as well as the areas targeted for improvement over the next 3 years. You may wish to add to the projection tables below to report on your own institution's specified target groups if not already included in Access to Success.

For the period 2022/23 to 2024/25:

- The WAP Officer will develop a blended approach to widening participation, offering both physical and digital engagement opportunities, therefore promoting accessibility.
- The WAP Officer will continue to build on the Inspire Employability programme to support and encourage members of the community who are currently not engaged in employment or education to progress, whether that is into full-time education, part-time education, community courses, higher level apprenticeships or training and employment. Our aim is to close the gaps and support learners to creatively meet their employment potential through innovative development of soft skills.
- The WAP Officer alongside the HE Quality Enhancement Lead and the Careers Academy team will continue to provide a dedicated accessible careers programme available to all widening participation students which will include career advice, progression planning and transversal skills workshops.
- We will ensure that the underrepresented learners we work with have access to the information and experiences they need in order to choose the courses which are best suited to them based on their interests, abilities and future career ambitions.
- Raise awareness of the WAP HE Scholarship and increase the number of applications from learners from Q1 and Q2 backgrounds by 2% each year.
- To support HE Mobilities, Enhancing the HE Curriculum, Skills Development and Employability we plan to offer two HE Skills Mobilities Bursaries. One bursary will be awarded to a HE student from Q1 & Q2 and one bursary will be awarded to a HE student in receipt of DSA/Student with a Disability so that they can travel to a European Partner. The bursaries will be €10,000 (sterling exchange rate to be factored) for each student. This is Covid/Pandemic/Global event depending.
- The Widening Access and Participation Officer will continue to offer specialised support and a variety of outreach activities to ensure learners have fair access to higher education. We will recruit students from groups currently under-represented in HE through our NWRC Roadshow events and through other proactive outreach activities. We aim to remove barriers, provide information, and aid transition in order to make education accessible for all.
- Increase HE & FE applications by 2% prior, throughout and after Progression Week each year.
- Continue to increase retention by 2% in targeted groups each consecutive year.
- Increase use of the Maths Cube within the college for HE students by 1%.

1.3 (a) TARGETS

You will note that the tables numbered (i) to (vi) below have been pre populated with your institution’s average enrolment for the last 3 years. You are now required to insert numerical targets for each of the groups identified across the **3 years 2022/23 – 2024/25**. These groups are regarded as being under represented in Access to Success.

- (i) Group: **MDM Quintile 1**
Outcome: **To increase participation of those from NI MDM Q1**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017-2020)	Targets/Outcome			
4 Year Average	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
434		362	366	370

- (ii) Group: **Students with a Disability**
Outcome: **To increase the number of students who declare a disability**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017-2020)	Targets/Outcome			
4 Year Average	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
128		121	122	123

- (iii) Group: **Students with a Disability**
 Outcome: **To increase the number of students in receipt of DSA**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017-2020)	Targets/Outcome			
4 Year Average	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
XX		35	36	37

- (iv) Group: **Young Males from Quintile 1**
 Outcome: **To increase participation of young males from NI MDM Quintile 1**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017-2020)	Targets/Outcome			
4 Year Average	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
74		72	74	76

- (v) Group: **Adult Learners**
 Outcome: **To increase the number of adult learners participating in HE**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017-2020)	Targets/Outcome			
4 Year Average	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
588		451	452	455

As HESA data is largely incomplete for the following area, the figure that you provided in a previous WAPP for 2016/17 has been inserted as a base line.

- (vi) Group: **Number of Care Experienced enrolments**
 Outcome: **To increase the number of enrolments for those from a care background**

BASE YEAR	Targets/Outcome			
		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Not available	Number	4	6	8

1.3(b) The following tables have been provided for you to now insert any other ‘specific’ institutional targets. These may be different to those groups identified in 1.3(a) or may relate to targets other than enrolments. In all cases you will need to identify the group and highlight what the target outcome will be e.g. outreach, retention etc.

- (i) **Young Adult Carers**

Outcome: To maintain/increase the number of enrolments for those

BASE YEAR 2020-2021	Targets/Outcome			
		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
6	Number	6	8	10

Please now outline the estimated 'direct' expenditure required to meet the identified objectives in the table below. You may wish to refer to Part 2 of the guidance notes in "How to Complete your Widening Access and Participation Plan" for a definition of direct spend. Whilst we appreciate that figures for later years are only indicative we do require estimations inserted in each of the categories.

Activity	Estimated Spend 2022/23 (£)	Estimated Spend 2023/24 (£)	Estimated Spend 2024/25 (£)
Bursaries	£91,000	£93,000	£95,000
Scholarships	£5000	£5000	£5000
Other financial Support	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000
Outreach	£13,500	£13,500	£13,500
Retention	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000
Research Activity	£500	£500	£500
Staffing/ Administration	£20,903	20,903	21,322
TOTAL	£170,903	£172,903	£175,322

- 1.4 List below the key programmes/projects financed from additional student fees that will contribute towards your institution's performance.

(Please refer to the appropriate section of the guidance notes before completing.)

NWRC Widening Access & Participation HE Scholarship / HE Bursary

Aspiration Raising / Retention

As part of the colleges agenda to widen access and participation we have made a clear commitment to ensure that students with financial need are able to access suitable advice and appropriate financial assistance. It is our aim to ensure that no student has a legitimate reason to be deterred from applying to NWRC because of their inability to afford their student journey. The Widening Access & Participation Higher Education Scholarship is awarded each year to two learners from underrepresented backgrounds, who receive £2500 per academic year to help with the costs of their tuition fees. They can of course still benefit from additional funding such as the HE bursary and Hardship Fund to help with other costs associated with their course. In March 2020, the Scholarship was awarded to two students for academic year 2019/20, who both received £2500 each for the reimbursement of their tuition fees and in February 2021 the scholarship was awarded to four students amounting to a £10,000 reimbursement of tuition fees for academic year 2020/21. Since 2019/20, application numbers for the Scholarship have tripled in academic year 2020/21, and through further promotion we are confident that application numbers for the scholarship will continue to rise in the coming years. We will continue to provide a £500 HE bursary to students from low-income households that are studying Higher Education courses at NWRC. The HE bursary and other Widening Access and Participation activities facilitate a reciprocal bond between NWRC and our Higher Education students. The HE bursary has been well received by students each year, with most students advising it helped them to remain on their course of study, which is promising in terms of retention within the college.

HE Skills Mobilities Bursaries

To support HE Mobilities, Enhancing the HE Curriculum, Skills Development and Employability we plan to offer two HE Skills Mobilities Bursaries beginning in academic year 2021/22. One bursary will be awarded to a HE student from Q1 & Q2 and one bursary will be awarded to a HE student in receipt of DSA/Student with a Disability so that they can travel to a European Partner. The bursaries will be €10,000 (sterling exchange rate to be factored) for each student and would cover the cost of student's passports and accommodation for the duration (3-4months) of their mobility. This is dependent on Covid/Pandemic/Global events but will be a huge benefit to skills development for the successful applicants in the two categories. Skills Development and enhancing the curriculum are key objections for 2021/22. We plan to review the bursaries after year one and hopefully in the future we can grow the scheme.

Elemental Social Prescribing Software

NWRC has joined forces with award winning company, Elemental Software, in a ground-breaking new partnership which will revolutionise the way students can access support services and programmes. We are the first ever Further and Higher College to adopt Elemental's Digital Social Prescribing Platform, which will enhance student wellbeing, build resilience, and promote new ways of working using social prescribing. This partnership marks an important development in the college's commitment to our student wellbeing programme. 2020 has been a difficult time for everyone. The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on the well-being and mental health of all our students, so there has never been a more urgent need for the college to introduce digital social prescribing. Not only will the platform allow us to bring all our internal services together, but we will also be able to connect our students to other services that are available in the wider community. Students can make their own self-referral, or they can be referred through a staff member. This will all be coordinated through our Safeguarding team and the staff in our Careers Academy. The Elemental Platform will also allow us, for the first time, to access baseline metrics in relation to the referral systems, so we can continually update and improve our services. Social prescribing is a growing movement that connects people with a range of non-clinical programmes, services, and events in their local community. It seeks to address people's needs across several areas such as financial stability, accommodation, digital inclusion, physical activity, diet and nutrition, mental health, and social support. By embedding Elemental's digital social prescribing platform into Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Programmes, we can connect students with non-clinical services internally and externally to support a range of issues that impact on student

health and wellbeing needs. This means that students will have access to a whole system approach to wellbeing, while also empowering them to take control of their health. It also provides us with the tools needed to provide holistic care for their students. The cost of Elemental is £10,000 for 3 years use of the platform. By introducing elemental's digital social prescribing platform, NWRC will:

- Connect students with non-clinical services within and beyond the college to support a range of health and wellbeing needs
- Allow students to self-refer into community support via Elemental's website module
- Embed a clear referral pathway and provide support when needed
- Offer referrals to services via chaplains, personal tutors, counsellors, housing, health, funding, and inclusion officers
- Measure and report on the impact of the Student Wellbeing programmes
- Reduce avoidable GP appointments and NHS escalations, saving time, cost, and resources
- Easily manage everything from within Elemental's digital social prescribing platform, meaning a seamless and simplified user journey
- Produce a sustainable social prescribing model addressing the identified wellbeing needs of all students.

NWRC Roadshow Events

Outreach & Recruitment / Aspiration Raising

The NWRC Roadshow was successfully introduced in 2018 was extended in 2019 to continue work influencing potential Widening Access & Participation students. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the roadshows were cancelled in 2020 and 2021, with outreach becoming more digital due to restrictions and resources having to be diverted to meet the needs of students at the time. The roadshows are due to resume in 2022. Our roadshows are outreach and recruitment events which take place outside NWRC and are specifically targeted at WAP cohorts to encourage HE course applications each year. Staff from Student Services, including the Widening Access & Participation Officer host the roadshows annually in three different locations: Derry-Londonderry, Strabane and Limavady. NWRC Roadshows are identical events that produce event engagement that allows NWRC to take its services out in to the heart of the communities and meet potential students face to face beyond their normal territory. These events are fully focused on removing barriers and targeting the hard to reach and the roadshow model is essential to reach individuals who may have never considered returning to education. The Roadshows comprise interactive curriculum demonstrations which are done during the events such as hairdressing/beauty/barbering demos, bricklaying and cookery with information stalls providing information on the different areas within Student Services including Student Finance, Student Union, Safeguarding, Health and Well-being and careers/progression advice from Careers Academy staff members. The roadshows primarily target areas within our two district councils where there are low progression rates to higher education, and focuses on assisting students to reach their potential, as well as demystifying the NWRC experience through overcoming common misconceptions. The Widening Access & Participation Officer is responsible for managing the NWRC Roadshow events, with a specific focus on engaging and inspiring students from under-represented groups and helping them to gain an understanding of the benefits of higher education and the opportunities available to them.

Inspire Employability Programme

Outreach Community Programme / Aspiration Raising

The development of a Careers Academy bridging programme is used to support and encourage members of the community who are currently not engaged in employment or education, and it has proved successful since its development, therefore it will continue to run. The non-accredited programme is made up of short modules developed to build confidence and resilience and is delivered in targeted communities, which are currently recognised under multiple deprivations measures including but not limited to young school aged mothers and fathers, socially excluded students and students who have faced significant barriers to education. Our aim is to close the gaps and support students to creatively meet their employment potential through innovative development of soft skills. The Inspire Employability Programme is a free tailored programme that allows participants to select the content. It offers a flexible, tailored approach which provides

personalised support, particularly for those facing additional barriers in the education and labour market. The programme offers participants the chance to enhance their soft skills, grow in confidence and receive a NWRC certification upon completion of the programme. The programme covers all areas of employability including CV, interview skills and teambuilding, with progression planning included. The programme aims to promote to participants progression, whether that is into full-time education, part-time education, community courses, higher level apprenticeships or training and employment. The advantage of the Inspire programme is the ability to remove barriers perspective disengaged students have about returning to education. By undertaking the Inspire Employability programme they eliminate those barriers. NWRC Careers Academy has developed the Inspire Employability Programme to support widening access. This will ensure no student is disadvantaged in gaining access to education and training.

Widening Access & Participation Officer

Outreach & Recruitment / Aspiration Raising

The Widening Access & Participation Officer continues to develop and lead on a range of assigned outreach activities including but not restricted to the Inspire Employability Programme, WAP Scholarship, HE Bursary, NWRC Roadshows, one-off events, and community partnerships and engagement projects to achieve an increase in the number of applicants and entrants from under-represented groups. The Widening Access & Participation Officer also designs and produces multimedia content, particularly image-based and video to share on social media channels to raise awareness of the college and the support available. The Widening Access & Participation Officer has also established and developed effective working relationships with community organisations, especially with local organisations that support Young Adult Carers in the city. Part of the WAP Officers responsibilities include working alongside the Careers Academy to provide a specialised Careers Education and tailored career planning to all targeted students and works alongside the other departments within Student Services to develop innovative initiatives that meet the objectives set out in the College Development Plan and the WAPP. The officer will also continue to contribute new ideas to access and outreach work and will support and promote the progression and transition of people from underrepresented groups and those least likely to engage in education to HE.

Community Hub Strabane

Aspiration Raising / Outreach & Recruitment

In 2018/19, we successfully launched the Community hub in Strabane; this is an example of productive links and partnerships benefitting the economy and social inclusion in the region. The exciting social inclusion project work is led by NWRC Strabane campus and our Employability Officer and has successfully linked with the Jobs and Benefits Office targeting widening access and supporting the unemployed back into education to enhance job opportunities. Through the award winning NWRC Careers Academy, Strabane campus is delivering their Inspire Programme in conjunction with Strabane Jobs and Benefits Office (JBO) to create a Community Hub for the local unemployed. The Employability Officer in Strabane is working with the team at the local JBO in developing a bespoke programme, which will support the Universal Credit System and help grow employability skills for those in search of employment. This project is the first of its kind in Northern; the initiative is still in its early stages but has so far been seen as a success by the team leaders at Strabane JBO who are eager to roll the programme out to their office in Limavady and eventually their two Offices in Derry. This is seen as a positive enrolment opportunity for the College especially in light of the coming policy changes around the Steps to Success Programme.

Induction / Freshers

Induction Programme / Retention

We provide a strong and inclusive student induction/ Freshers Week aimed at providing all our students with a sense of belonging to raise attainment and set high expectations. Our induction introduces students to life at NWRC and includes an orientation/scavenger hunt of the college campuses and buildings, guidance on using the University's virtual learning environment, and an opportunity for Freshers to get involved in the NWRC Student Union, get vital information on finance, careers, library services, safeguarding and Learning Link as well as other support services available at the college. We also provide all students with a Student Handbook (**See appendix 5**), which was first introduced in 2018/19 and is updated each academic year. This handbook is designed to help all students make the most of their time at North West Regional

College. It provides information that will help them access the many services and opportunities open to them at the college. Usually Induction/Freshers/Refreshers is a physical event which takes place at each campus at the beginning of each academic year, but since the pandemic we have moved things to our virtual platforms (**See appendix 6**), so that students can access advice and guidance on their student Canvas accounts at any stage of their studies. Virtual activities to date have included support service introduction videos, fresher content including interactive videos, announcements on key dates, and information about student discounts available in the local area.

Student Voice Initiative / Student Ambassadors

Outreach & Recruitment / Aspiration Raising

The Student Voice Initiative provides an opportunity to engage and include students from marginalised groups, with the aim that achievement and engagement will increase when these students have more ownership of their college community. Our Student Voice Initiative reinforces that what our students have to say matters in how the college operates. We welcome current students to represent NWRC as Student Representatives and inspire young people by visiting schools and events to promote NWRC and the benefits of further and higher education. The Student Union manages, mobilizes, and trains over 250 Class Representatives. They underpin the Student Voice in the College. They are trained to deal with conflict, advocate for their peers, and innovatively, in Safeguarding Awareness. Another innovation has been the end of year Student Voice Conference, at the conference more than eighty delegates take part in a professional event, engaging with external stakeholders, building relationships with peers, and thoroughly impressing NUS-USI, our national organization. In 2018/19, we officially developed the Student Representative role at NWRC, whereby representatives share their experiences of what it is like to study at NWRC with prospective students, their families, and teachers. They represent NWRC at events on and off-campus, with members of staff or with other student representatives. The number of people they engage with can vary from a handful to hundreds depending on the type of event. Types of events that Student Ambassadors help with include Open Events, School visits, NWRC Roadshows, Higher Education and UCAS Fairs, Community Events and Festivals, Campus Tours, Schools Visits to Campus. Twenty-one students undertook the student representative role in 2018/19 when we first introduced the training aimed at raising the profile of getting student feedback and encouraging engagement. The Student Voice Initiative allows students to develop their public speaking, teamwork, and independent thinking skills. The programme is a way of building self-confidence for many students and allows them to meet other NWRC students from a wide range of different courses and backgrounds. The Student Voice Initiative helps the WAP Officer to identify causes for non-engagement and what students feel are the most useful sources of support within the college, and it identifies young people's perception of their educational experiences today, which can be a powerful tool in helping the WAP Officer to investigate and improve practice towards WAP cohorts.

Mental Health Awareness

Retention

We firmly believe that a huge part of mental health support in colleges starts with awareness. Students need to be educated about mental health in order to be aware of the signs, so that they can know where to go for help and may also be able to help others. Integrating mental health awareness into our resources and outreach activities will continue to increase knowledge and understanding of those experiencing difficulties, removing any stigma or social misconceptions, and replacing these with an atmosphere of positivity and acceptance. This in turn will significantly benefit the lives of our students experiencing problems and potentially even reduce their symptoms. Recognising that students from underrepresented groups may experience additional challenges which impact on their mental health and wellbeing, NWRC and the Student Services team have a clear commitment to ensure that the college offers easy-to-access support for students from a range of backgrounds. The college Safeguarding Canvas site is regularly updated with mental health information, videos and support contact details which are provided by WHSCT. The Safeguarding Team promoted World Mental Health Day on 10th of October 2020 on college social media sites and a positive mental health awareness tree was also displayed in the foyer of Strand Road campus (**See appendix 7**). Mental Health Awareness badges were purchased from the Mental Health Foundation and were available for staff and students from the college foyer. The Student Services team are persistently promoting positive mental health at NWRC, as mental health issues in the younger generation are a growing concern in our city and region. The Careers

Academy support the safeguarding agenda, through offering mind-set and resilience workshops. The safeguarding and Student Services staff also host Mental Health Awareness Week at the college annually. In 2020/21, Mental Health Awareness Week was again virtual due to Covid-19, there was a daily schedule implemented for students to take part in online activities (**See appendix 8**). Under normal circumstances, Mental Health Awareness Week is usually hosted within the college each year, with the Safeguarding team inviting mental health charities such as Hurt, Zest and Aware to the college to deliver Positive Mental Health workshops to students. There is an ongoing target that this can be facilitated in all NWRC college campuses during Mental Health Awareness Week in the future, this would cost £5000 to provide in all NWRC campuses. The Safeguarding team also promote the Elephant in The Room Campaign, Lifeline, Action Mental Health campaigns and Inspire Counselling Services throughout the year using the Student Portal, Student Handbook, social media, and internal resources. Student Services is the main hub when it comes to Mental Health within NWRC, with staff members undertaking a range of support activities, including pre-admission activity with WAP applicants, allocating tailored support and wider well-being activities. The Student Services team alongside the Safeguarding team educate students on mental health issues with the aim of reducing self-harming behaviours, reducing stigma associated with mental illness and promoting help seeking behaviours and emotional well-being practices through outreach events.

Higher Education Week / Progression Week

Retention / Outreach & Recruitment / Aspiration Raising

The Careers Academy host Higher Education Week each year and Progression Weeks are hosted at different times during the academic year both for Further Education and Higher Education. During Higher Education Week the week of events provide local people of all ages, the opportunity to find out more about the huge benefits of studying higher-level professional courses and qualifications at the college's award-winning campuses in Derry, Strabane and Limavady. Since the beginning of Covid-19 many of our events have had to shift to virtual events, but for Progression Week in 2020 and 2021 we have continued to work on providing short videos from former students who have studied HE courses and gone on to full-time employment or further study, in fields such as Medical and Applied Science, Healthcare, Counselling, Software Development, Early Years, Hair and Beauty and much more across all college social media platforms (**See appendix 9**). For Higher Education Week we have held Live Q&A's and provided informative videos covering a range of Higher Education and Widening Access and Participation areas (**See appendix 10**). In previous years Progression Week has led to an additional 72 Further Education applications throughout Progression Week and 54 Higher Education applications as well as 47 access applications throughout Higher Education Week. We firmly believe that these events allow students to explore all their options which enables individuals to make an informed decision about their future and aim to increase Higher Education applications prior, throughout and after progression week by 2% from previous figures.

Young Adult Carers

Retention / Aspiration Raising

As part of the new Carers Support team at the college, the WAP officer has been appointed as the Carers Support Officer whereby they have developed a new student support system for young adult carers at NWRC. The Widening Access & Participation Officer alongside the Safeguarding Officer at the college provide a range of opportunities for Young Adult Carers to engage with the college that are designed with the aim of raising educational aspiration and supporting attainment (**See appendix 11**). This includes offering bespoke information and advice from a dedicated member of the Carers Support Team and hosting virtual Carers Coffee Mornings which provide an opportunity for Young Adult Carers to get together with their peers in a safe and friendly environment, with the Carers Support team on hand at all sessions to facilitate and provide support (**See appendix 12**). After these sessions, the Young Adult Carers are provided with a token for all their hard work in balancing their caring responsibilities and college life, this can range from coffee vouchers to takeaway vouchers (**See appendix 13**), which will hopefully raise their spirits and help them to understand that they are supported by the college. The Widening Access & Participation Officer has also developed a 'Young Adult Carers Guide to Studying at NWRC' booklet (**See appendix 14**), which is available online for current and potential students to view, as well as a video providing information on our new Young Adult Carer college support system at the college, whereby we can ensure the early identification of Young Adult Carers in the college and implement support across their student journey so that they are more likely to remain

in college, succeed and make a successful transition into higher education, further training, or employment (**See appendix 15**). The Carers Support Team have also formed a partnership with local services in Northern Ireland such as Action for Children and Barnardo's to offer support for our Young Adult Carers at NWRC. One of the key elements of support which the college offers is the Young Adult Carers Pass Card (**See appendix 16**). When Young Adult Carers are identified in the college, they will be given a card which they can show to lecturers or other support staff. This helps staff to recognise that they may require additional support and flexibility around deadlines or time out of class etc. without having to explain their caring responsibilities multiple times. In June 2021 NWRC achieved the Carers Federation Quality Standard in Carer Support accreditation through the Driving Change Project which recognises organisations that have gone the extra mile to support carers. This QSCS accreditation acknowledges that we recognise Young Adult Carers here at NWRC and have put in place a support system that allows us to identify and fully support learners at the college who have caring responsibilities, so that they can thrive and achieve success.

Progress Coach Role

The development of the Progress Coach role aims to target courses with low retention. Progress coaches work with students at risk of withdrawing and provide one-to-one support to students to monitor performance and maximise retention and achievement (**See appendix 17**). This is achieved by liaising with teaching staff, interdepartmental collaboration, intervention strategies, monitoring of student attendance and progress and carrying out one to one meetings with students to monitor progress and enable progression. The progress coaches are reducing withdrawals through a direct result of their different retention initiatives. In 2019/20, 80% of students who engaged with progress coaches remained within the college and in 2020/21 the progress coaches successfully referred 64 students to other student services support areas, indicating a positive interdepartmental collaboration with a holistic approach to student centred care. The progress coaches also enabled 107 students to remain on course via different support interventions.

The Maths Cube

The Maths Centre is situated in the Careers Academy area of the College and all students can access it. For various reasons, including personal, educational, and social, many students arrive at the college with negative attitudes about maths and a perception that they are not very good at maths. The Maths Cube is one initiative that the college has introduced as a means of helping such students. Currently, the service provided includes: one to one tutoring sessions centred on a learning plan determined by the result of a diagnostic test and small group tutoring sessions either recommended by a course tutor or by the students themselves. The Maths Cube exists to assist students to achieve their full potential. For some, this will mean gaining the few extra marks needed to turn a good result into an excellent one. For others, it may be that a failure becomes a pass. The overall goal of the Maths Cube is to build students' confidence in mathematics and thereby enable them to be more successful in the study of their course and to progress successfully.

1.5 Please provide a short summary of how your activities link to the key actions within Access to Success.

- Northern Ireland's Universities and Further Education Colleges have united behind a new initiative aimed at ensuring school leavers are made aware of the full range of higher education options available locally. For the first time school leavers, parents and careers staff will have access to the full higher education course listing through a single source at each of Northern Ireland's two universities. The dedicated [microsite](#) on each University website will provide a full listing of all higher education opportunities available to school leavers. Individuals who do not receive an offer can use the web pages to signpost them towards other provisions, including foundation degrees and higher education courses at Northern Ireland's six local Further Education Colleges. The aim is to ensure that Northern Ireland's school leavers understand the many alternatives and valued routes to a university degree that are available via Northern Ireland's six regional Colleges, in order to grow our own talent, to keep our students and nurture their talents and abilities to support the NI economy.
- There has been a robust curriculum review by academic departments to analyse data and

trends and refresh the curriculum to support enrolments. This includes new Level 3 provision which will lead to new progression opportunities at Level 4 and 5.

- The college continues to offer non-traditional routes into Higher Education through Adult Access courses and increased part-time opportunities. The Careers Academy team also promote the APEL system as an alternative route into Higher Education courses offered at the college.
- The Widening Access and Participation Officer alongside the Safeguarding Team at NWRC have developed a new student support system for young adult carers at NWRC, whereby we can ensure the early identification of Young Adult Carers in the college and implement support across their student journey so that they are more likely to remain in college, succeed and make a successful transition into higher education, further training, or employment.
- The Learning Link are committed to equality, diversity and to promoting an inclusive teaching and learning environment for all. The Learning Link welcomes students with a range of additional needs such as specific learning difficulties, e.g., dyslexia, physical disabilities, medical conditions, sensory impairments, general learning difficulties and mental health conditions. They encourage both existing students and new applicants to the College to declare their additional needs to them. If the team are aware that students have additional needs and require extra help to successfully engage with their course, it will enable them to make reasonable adjustments for the duration of their studies. The Learning Link also assist Higher Education students seeking learning support in applying for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).
- We ensure that costs of Higher Education are clearly understood by students from underrepresented backgrounds through offering a variety of online information videos to prospective students and student finance announcements on Canvas for internal students. Our tuition fees are available on our website and prospectus for current and prospective students alongside the communication of scholarships, bursaries, and part-time fees. Our financial support is designed to ensure that students can engage with their studies and college life, allowing them the best possible opportunity of success.
- The Careers Academy continue to support all students from their first day at NWRC. The Careers team provide a professional, high-quality careers and information service for students, with the aim of supporting and developing our students by providing the tools they need to enhance their employability and realise their career ambitions. The Careers team fully support curriculum teams and embed careers provision within their academic courses, collaboration is regular and on an ongoing basis which ensures quality provision. We want our students to leave the college with the skills and confidence they need for the future they want.
- Periodic Reviews of Higher Education provision ensure that Quality Improvement is a continuous cycle, and the criteria are mapped to QAA Quality Standards.
- NWRC continues to engage with the most disadvantaged in our region to help them overcome barriers to education through the provision of a community based professional and technical curriculum offer. We also continue to attract more students from disadvantaged backgrounds into Higher Education through our outreach activities with various community groups e.g., School Age Mothers, The Women's Centre, The Methodist Mission and Foróige, which promotes social inclusion and guarantees full participation from all members of society. Targeting disadvantaged communities and addressing barriers to education is key to widening access and NWRC will continue to reach out to severely disadvantaged areas in the city and region. By continuing to provide support to people to gain education, training, and qualifications from Level 1 upwards, their opportunities for employment should increase in our city and region.
- Student Services consists of a range of teams that support our students to settle and stay at the college, and deal with problems that may affect their learning through professional advice and help. The Student Services staff strive to ensure students feel welcome and comfortable from day one and that they are aware that there is plenty of help and support available to

them. Student Services teams are made up of Widening Access, Safeguarding, Careers, Learning Support, Student Finance, Students Union, and Student Health & Wellbeing, and all of the support departments are widely publicized throughout the year with an aim to provide integrated, professional, student-centred services which offer information, advice, guidance and support to enable every student to develop and achieve their full potential.

- Communication between individual lecturers and the college's Student Services support teams is vital and this relationship is central to the student experience. The holistic support offered with the collaboration between academic and support teams at the college offers support for students' academic and non-academic needs, and with targeted ongoing support the retention rate of all students should increase. By continuing to use a collaborative system, the possibility of academic success that all students strive for including those who are underrepresented in HE can be reached.

1.6 How do you plan to communicate information on the availability of financial and other assistance to students?

NWRC is focused on delivering information to students using a range of methods. Current and prospective students will continue to be able to access information on the availability of financial and other assistance in a range of formats including:

- The colleges full-time and part-time prospectus (available online and hard copies). NWRC publishes information on fee rates alongside information on financial support including student loans, grants, scholarships, bursaries.
- Open Day Information sessions give applicants the opportunity to visit the different college campuses and engage with our staff and student ambassadors where they will promote NWRC, including our financial support packages.
- College Induction and Freshers Week. This includes short student services introduction videos and resources that share vital information on areas such as Students Union, Student Finance, Careers Academy, Safeguarding, Learning Link, Library and Health & Well-being that can be shared in classrooms, on social media and on the student portal.
- Email and text message campaigns to students
- Our Student Newsletter allows us to provide consistent, open communication with our students and is used to provide information on events, resources, activities and offers tips for supporting the whole student's health and well-being.
- Plasma screens are located around college campuses in key areas where students, staff and visitors can find useful information e.g., upcoming events, announcements, and news. The aim is for key information to be presented consistently on screens across the college, to complement information on other communications channels.
- Our Student Handbook, the intention of the handbook is that it should act as a reference document for students throughout their time at the college. It provides information on specific support that students may make use of and how it can be accessed should and is easily navigable for both new and experienced students.
- Every course has an Academic Course Handbook. Chapter one within the handbook is generic and ensures that academic information is shared with all students from induction and includes Academic Referencing, academic integrity and key terminology pertaining to curriculum and policies.
- Promotion of all financial assistance including emergency financial support by student finance staff through a range of interactive events and drop-ins and classroom visits throughout the year. at Money week, drop-in sessions, and classroom visits throughout the year.
- The student finance team have developed a Student Finance Self-Assessment tool available on the college website. This tool allows prospective students to determine the correct student funding package for their circumstances prior to coming to NWRC. Given the complexity of fees and the various forms of financial support available to students depending on their circumstances, it is essential that we communicate this clearly and accurately through a dynamic tool.

- NWRC Roadshow events provide a one-stop opportunity for prospective students to find out more about the college - as well as key areas of college guidance, including student life and student finance.
- We communicate with current students through our student portal Canvas which provides details of a variety of support throughout the duration of their course, including important announcements.
- Our Careers Academy at NWRC have successfully gained accreditation from the matrix™ Quality Standard, which is the international quality standard for organisations that deliver information, advice and/or guidance (IAG). This standard demonstrates and recognises our commitment to the delivery of high-quality information, advice and guidance by continual review, evaluation, and development of our service.
- Online communications through the colleges online chat function Tawk which is supported by trained college staff to ensure current and prospective students with any queries can access information on all funding/assistance available to them.
- Mail Chimp to share information about student surveys or other key information/dates.
- Staff members from the Student Services department and the Careers Academy manage student-focused social media channels (including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter). These channels provide regular engaging, valuable and diverse communications to all student audiences, including students from under-represented groups. The team utilises these platforms to host appropriate student messages, celebrate their successes, and they regularly highlight what support is available to students throughout their student journey at the college.

The approved Widening Access & Participation Plan will be published on the college website: www.nwrc.ac.uk.

Improving our communications is very much a priority for NWRC and we plan further work to understand how we can improve student engagement in the wide range of support available to help individuals realise their potential. One priority is to continue with our annual Student Conference which helps to identify best practice and areas for improvement so we can drive development within the college and support our underrepresented learners.

1.7 How do you plan to monitor progress against the targets and the achievement of outcomes?

Monitoring of the progress towards meeting the targets outlined in this widening access & participation plan will be done regularly when the Head of Learner Services and the Widening Access & Participation Officer meet to reflect on the extent and success of delivery and to identify areas of best practice and areas which need further development. An essential part of these regular meetings will be to understand progress against the targets, and what impact activities are having. These meetings will also be crucial to identifying areas of concern and what actions might need to be taken should we find that our progress towards a target is becoming insufficient, or not progressing as we had hoped, we can then ensure that we redirect resources if necessary to drive continual improvements towards targets. Periodic Reviews of all HE provision will also continue alongside regular curriculum reviews of academic departments.

Targets and achievements are also assessed on a termly basis collectively by the WAP Officer, Careers Academy Manager and Head of Learner Services, after which they are then reviewed by the CLT (Curriculum Leadership Team) then on to the Senior Leadership Team before going for review by the Governing Body – Education Committee. Specific widening access & participation activities are also assigned dedicated KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) to ensure that progress is continually checked and recorded. These KPI's also allow the Widening Access & Participation Officer to stay motivated with the targets set out in the widening access and participation plan as well as providing a point of reference for making future or past comparisons.

NWRC recognises its responsibility to demonstrate the effectiveness of our outreach activities, firstly to ensure individual projects meet their aims and objectives and, secondly, that they are targeted at those who need most support. We intend to continually review and improve outreach activity and gain

feedback from participants via online surveys to inform future developments. The appointment of the Widening Access & Participation in 2019 has significantly improved our capability to monitor and evaluate our widening access and participation activities and going forward they will work in collaboration with the HE Lead for Curriculum who will represent curriculum HE Strategy & HE Enhancement.

1.8 Please provide an additional evaluation on how you think your institution is performing or provide us with relevant documents in line with section 1.8 of the guidance document.

(Full details on how to complete this section are in the guidance notes)

In order to ensure consistency across institutions we would ask that you use the Kirkpatrick Model for this exercise. The concept is that individual institutions will learn from this self-evaluation and obtain evidence to influence future widening participation activity and plans. You may evaluate the institution's widening participation activity as a whole, or evaluate individual projects.

The following sub headings should help focus your response. The Department expects that most institutions will be able to evaluate widening participation activity to at least Level 3 (as below).

Level 1 Evaluation – Reactions

What participants thought and felt about the programme

WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION HE SCHOLARSHIP 2020/21

I found the application process really easy with just a simple form to fill out, and regular communication from the widening access & participation officer regarding it. The absolute joy I felt to receive the award cannot be put into words. I, several times, had to consider dropping out of yet another course due to financial difficulty and receiving no monetary support from student finance. In the end I had to get a personal loan with a high interest rate to pay my fees and the relief that I can now pay that loan off without having to worry about interest or damaging my credit score is amazing. I am so so appreciative of my time at the College and how easy you have made the hardship I have faced. I just want to thank you so much as it means the world.

- Amy Harkin
Widening Access & Participation Scholarship 20/21 Recipient

I would really encourage students to apply for The Widening Access & Participation Scholarship. The application process is clear, straightforward and all your information can be submitted online via email.

Winning the Scholarship for me means less worry and less student debt. I can now afford to go on to university and work towards my degree.

- Siobhan NIGHallchoir
Widening Access & Participation Scholarship 20/21 Recipient

Applying for the Widening Access scholarship was very straightforward. I applied with an open mind that if I did not then at least I tried. Never did I expect to actually win the fund.

I am beyond overwhelmed. This scholarship will allow me to continue my university experience and gain my degree without the pressures and worry of becoming consumed in debt. I am very thankful to North West Regional College for choosing me as the recipient, thank you.

- Sara Stewart
Widening Access & Participation Scholarship 20/21 Recipient

INSPIRE EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMME – FEEDBACK 2021

Brilliant course, it met more than any of my expectations. I would highly recommend this course, it was very relaxed and delivered professionally by Eva excellent tutor.

INSPIRE EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMME
PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK JUNE 2021

It taught me all what I wanted and more. Eva gave us brilliant advice and tips. Giving me confidence to move on without baggage.

INSPIRE EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMME
PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK JUNE 2021

Gives up to date info. It also helps you look forward and be positive.

INSPIRE EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMME
PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK JUNE 2021

STUDENT VOICE INITIATIVE 2019

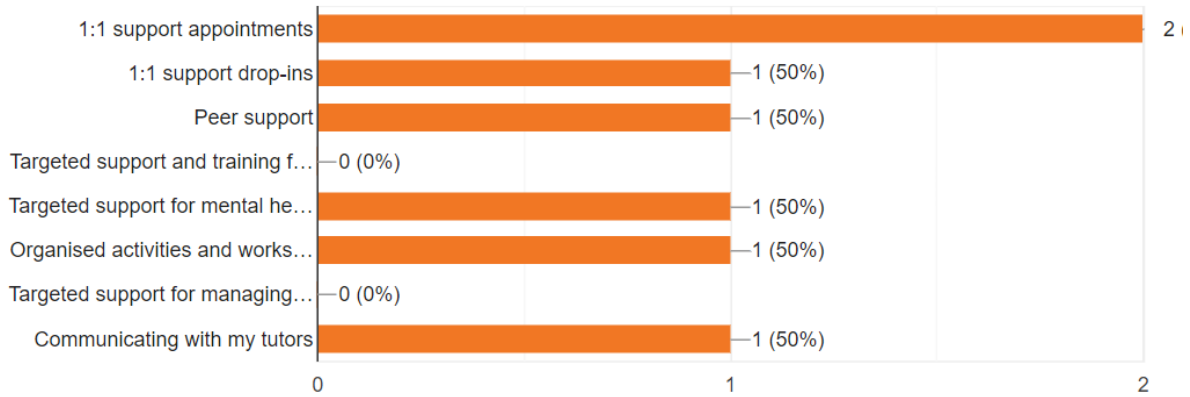
A great idea for feedback and it mixed the students from all campuses.

CAROLINE BARR
YOUR VOICE 19 FEEDBACK JUNE 2021

YOUNG ADULT CARERS – ONLINE SURVEY 2021

What support at the college have you accessed as a Young Adult Carer?

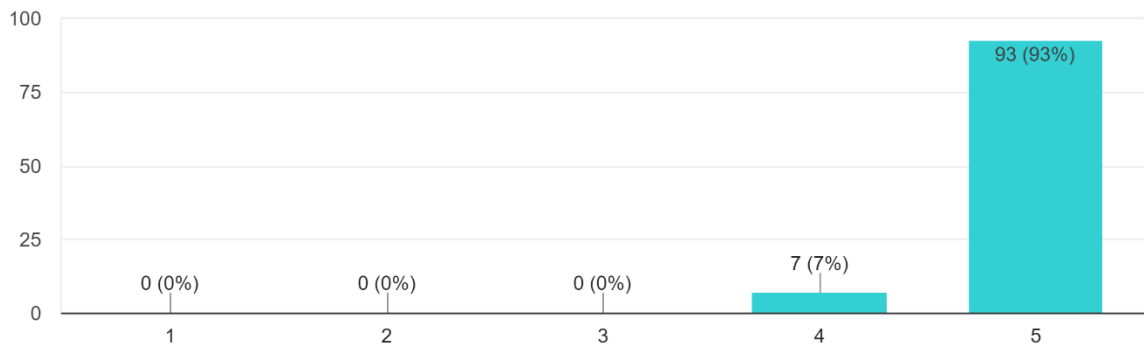
2 responses



THE CAREERS ACADEMY ONLINE SURVEY 2021

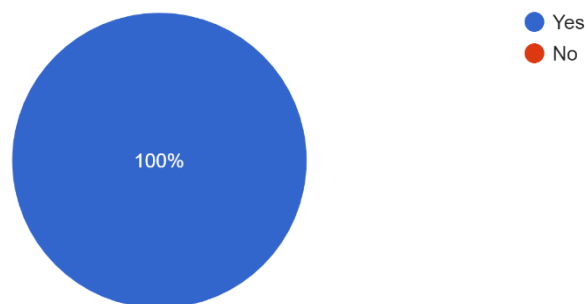
Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received from the Careers Academy?

100 responses



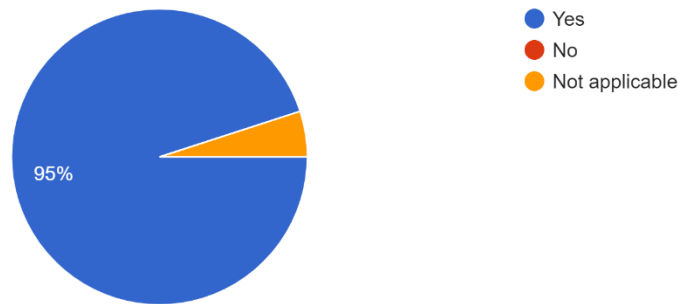
Would you recommend speaking to the Careers Academy to other people?

100 responses



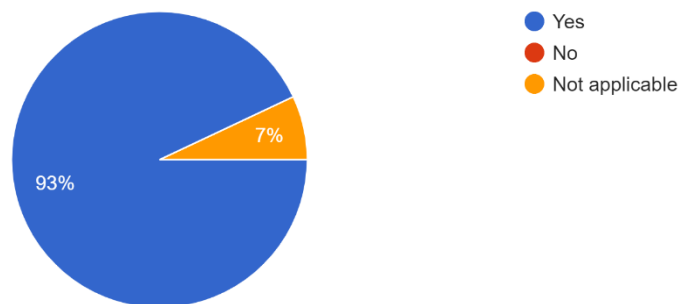
Did the staff member ensure that you understood what your next steps should be?

100 responses



Do you feel more prepared to make decisions about your career options after speaking with a member of the Careers Academy?

100 responses

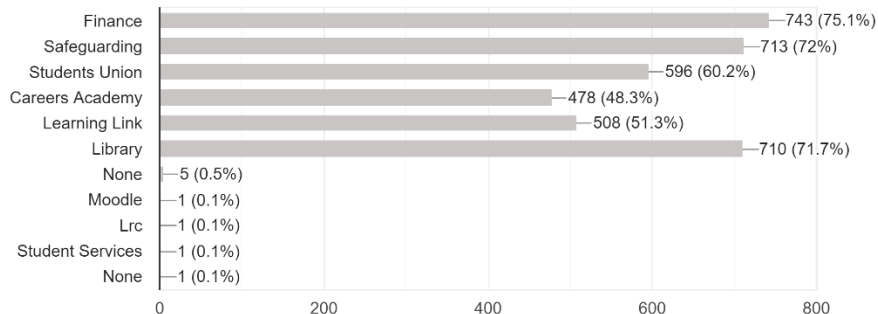


Level 2 Evaluation - Learning

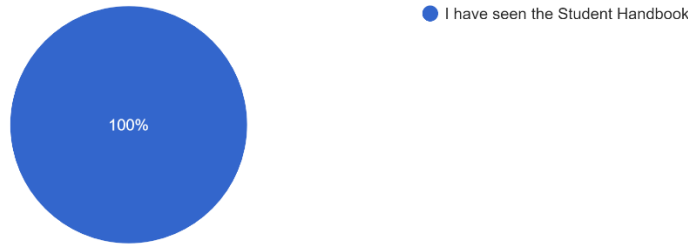
The resulting increase in knowledge or capability

Which of the following NWRC support services are you aware of?

990 responses



Please tick the box to indicate you have seen the Student Handbook
381 responses



18/19 QDP Survey

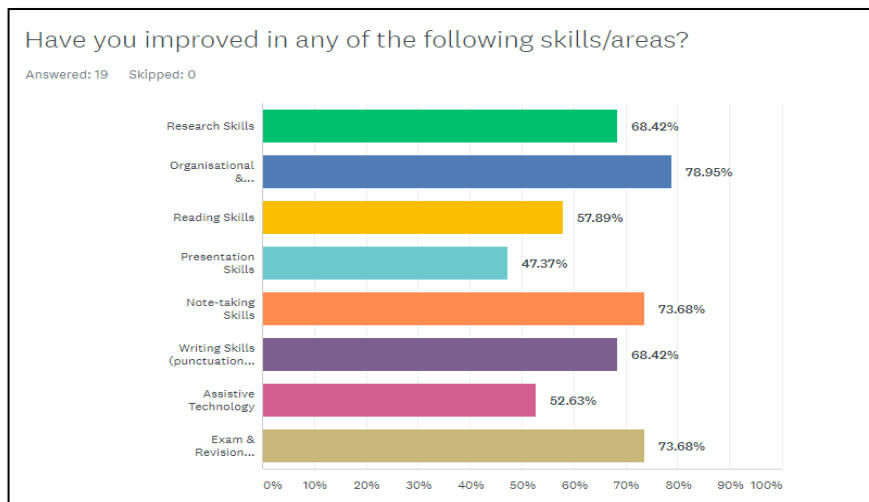
Question	Percentage Agree		
	Nov-17	Apr-18	Jan-19
Clear about support I can get from the College	86		88
I have got a copy of the Student Handbook	72		88

- Impact -2% increase in 18/19- students are clear about the support they can get from college.
- Impact -16% increase in students getting a copy of the Student Handbook from 17/18.

The Learner Services teams helps learners achieve suitably high levels of competency in the development and application of their knowledge and skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology through the following interventions.

All one-to-one guidance interviews inform students of the maths cube and the study skills opportunities on offer through the Library and Learning link teams.

- The careers academy helps student achieve high levels of ICT through undertaking digital skills workshops covering Innovation, social media, Web Presence, Cyber Security, Artificial Intelligence, Making Decisions with data
- Digital skills workshops were also delivered through the Careers Academy in support of Barclay life skills.
- Learning link helped develop 68 students English skills through engagement with study skills activities in 18/19 and the feedback shows they have improved skills in English:



Level 3 Evaluation – Transfer

Behaviour - extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation/application

Evaluations take place continually throughout the year in order to improve monitoring of the progress of the college widening access and participation plan and activities. NWRC employed a new full-time Widening Access & Participation Officer in March 2019, as part of the WAP Officers responsibilities; feedback/evaluations will be collected via questionnaires/surveys etc. after each WAP activity in order to assess Widening Access and Participation projects and student opinions to evaluate the effectiveness of WAP Projects within the college. We are committed to robust evaluation and continuous improvement and are motivated by the potential our findings will have in fine tuning our practice to benefit our students more widely. As a college, we have enhanced the opportunities to capture the student voice by setting up the Student Voice Initiative, which acts as a platform for feedback and where new ideas can be co-created by staff and students collaboratively. This initiative ultimately leads to the annual 'Your Voice' Student conference at NWRC, which is the culmination of Student Voice Activity at NWRC for the academic year and provides the perfect opportunity for students and staff to share ideas and feedback on their time at NWRC.

Level 4 Evaluation- Results

Results- the effects resulting from performance

The HE bursary and other Widening Access and Participation activities facilitate a reciprocal bond between NWRC and our Higher Education students. The HE bursary has been well received by students each year, with the majority of students advising it helped them to remain on their course of study, which is promising in terms of retention within the college. The HE Bursary continues to support students by helping them manage their finances and by assisting them with completing their studies by financing travel, materials etc. The Higher Education Bursary contributes to positive student mental health, with students having reduced worries regarding their finances and it helps them to participate more fully in student life. Students from under-represented backgrounds (WAP cohorts) are more likely to be worried about the financial aspects of Higher Education, such as budgeting money whilst at college, this can lead to an increased possibility of them considering withdrawing from their course and results in an overall reduced student experience, therefore the Higher Education Bursary is an incentive for them to remain on their course and succeed.

Reference List

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